

'Stupendous undertaking' aided economy

What the April 1909, Coast Magazine called "one of the most stupendous undertakings in modern times" was the building of what was called the North Bank Railroad, which linked Spokane with Vancouver and Portland.

The completion of the railroad gave people of the Inland Empire a good link

with coast ports and helped stimulate the sale of their farm and livestock produce.

The completed line consisted of an entirely new railroad from Portland to Spokane through the Columbia Gorge, a distance of 377 miles. Construction cost was about \$40,000,000. It was opened for operation from Pasco to

Cliffs, on the Columbia River, a distance of 112 miles, on Dec. 15, 1907.

The line was extended to Lyle, 34 additional miles, on Jan. 15, 1908. The stretch from there to Vancouver — another 76 miles — was finished the following March 16.

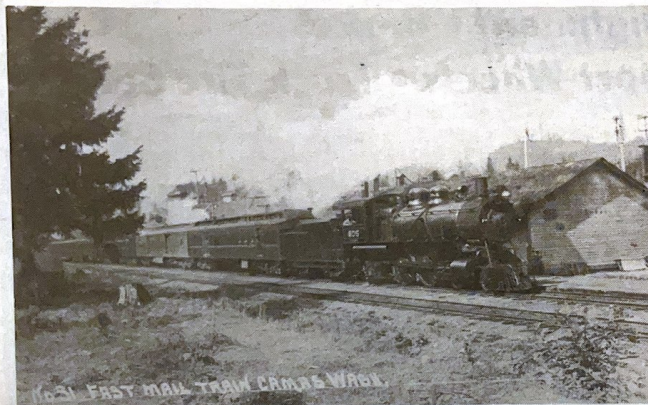
Due to bridge construction between

Vancouver and Portland, the line was not open to the latter city until Nov. 22, 1908.

The line followed the Columbia and Snake rivers from Portland to Snake River junction, approximately 260 miles east of Portland.

The building of this railroad opened up a

productive country which had only been accessible by water or wagon road. It meant much not only to the Columbia Gorge area but the Inland Empire — including Idaho and parts of Oregon — in realization of the true potentials of these areas. It also made Vancouver a clearing-house for goods from these areas.



THIS WAS what was described as a fast mail train through Camas. Photo was taken before WWI.



RAILROAD contract workers dig away at a hillside, laying track just beyond the Camas city limits, according to Mrs. E. Tidland. The action takes place about 1906, she said, and represented Camas' link with the North Bank Railroad, which linked Spokane with Vancouver and Portland.